

**Maine Revised Statutes**  
**Title 22: HEALTH AND WELFARE**  
**Chapter 271: HEALTH PROGRAMS**

**§1696-A. FINDINGS AND INTENT**

The Legislature finds and declares that the proliferation of hazardous substances in the environment poses a growing threat to the public health, safety and welfare; that the constantly increasing number and variety of hazardous substances, and the many routes of exposure to them make it difficult and expensive to adequately monitor and detect any adverse health effects attributable to them; that individuals are often able to detect and thus minimize effects of exposure to hazardous substances if they are aware of the identity of the substances and the early symptoms of unsafe exposure; and that individuals have an inherent right to know the full range of the risks they face so that they can make reasoned decisions and take informed actions concerning their employment and their living conditions. [1985, c. 494, §2 (NEW).]

The Legislature further declares that accidental releases of hazardous materials pose a threat to public health and safety and that there are serious questions concerning the State's ability to respond to these emergencies in a coordinated and effective manner; and that local health, fire, police, safety and other government officials require information about the identity, characteristics and quantities of hazardous substances used and stored in communities within their jurisdictions, in order to adequately plan for, and respond to, emergencies and enforce compliance with applicable laws and rules concerning these substances. [1985, c. 494, §2 (NEW).]

The Legislature further declares that the extent of the toxic contamination of the air, water, and land in this State has caused a high degree of concern among its residents; and that much of this concern is needlessly aggravated by the unfamiliarity of these substances to residents. [1985, c. 494, §2 (NEW).]

The Legislature determines that it is in the public interest for the State to examine its emergency response mechanisms and procedures for accidents involving hazardous materials, to establish a comprehensive program for the disclosure of information about hazardous substances in the community and to provide a procedure whereby residents of this State may gain access to this information. [1985, c. 494, §2 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

1985, c. 494, §2 (NEW).

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